

RESPECT YOUR INHERITANCE

"I am not disposed to criticise those members of our citizenry who spend precious hours in the genealogy alcove of the public library trying to trace the branches of the family tree. It is, at least, a harmless indoor sport. It is interesting to learn what strains of blood commingled to make us what we are. It is rewarding too if we do not find too many ancestors hanging from the limbs of the tree.

"But, since the direct effect of heritable characteristics is almost lost beyond three generations, genealogical research deals mostly in factors which have been very thinly diffused. Not the quality of our endowments is as important as the manner we employ and develop them. I knew a man whose spacious library was filled with crests, armorial bearings, oil portraits and morocco-bound books which traced his lineage to knighthood. But, he was a perfect rounder. The heraldic display was a shabby cloak for a worthless character.

"An inheritance, is, nonetheless, important. To cherish those fine qualities in parents and grandparents so that there is a conscious desire and a jealous pride, to keep the family line strong, clean, and untainted by disintegrating elements, that is one of the Christian duties.

"It is not insignificant that the two peoples of the world who have had the greatest racial potency and toughness and therefore, the highest survival rate, are the Chinese and the Jews. And among these people the family-tie has been strong. Ancestral worship is no mystical religion among the Chinese but a firm belief that the family is the sacred unit through which the very structure of the race is preserved. The recurrent waves of persecution have taught the Jew that without jealous regard for perpetuation of the family, they cannot survive as a minority.

"The Russians, after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, came near wrecking the family as an institution through an almost complete indifference to the sacredness of marriage. They soon saw their mistake. In fact, it was the people, and not the government, who demonstrated the inworkability of "dime-store" marriage-contracts and divorce by verbal agreement.

"What we Americans seem to be losing and losing very rapidly is the recognition that 'honor your parents' is a moral obligation and that the corollary 'honor your children' is necessary for the spiritual and social salvation of the nation. It is a sad commentary upon our generation that so many parents seem not to care a Scotch farthing what happens to the moral welfare of their children. I do not intend to exaggerate this sinister aspect of our American life. But certainly it will be a fatal day when our families will have lost their self-respect and pride of virtue and grow unconcerned about what kind of trashy and immoral strains are fed into the family line. As John Ruskin once said 'It is of no vital importance whether parents have two children or ten. It is of universal concern whether those they do rear are fit to be hanged or not.' A good inheritance is not necessarily a rich inheritance or a distinguished inheritance or a learned one - these are not heritable qualities. But physical, mental, and moral energy are qualities